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RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 000626

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/PPD; OSD FOR POPOVICH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/01/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UN](#) [UNGA](#) [KV](#) [SR](#) [HR](#)
SUBJECT: CROATIA ALSO OPPOSES SERBIAN EFFORT TO REFER
KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE TO THE ICJ

REF: STATE 91908

Classified By: Rick Holtzapple, POLCOUNS, Reasons 1.4 B/D

¶1. (C) POLCOUNS delivered reftel message to Neven Mikec, Chief of Staff at the Croatian Foreign Ministry, on August 28. Mikec noted that Croatia had received a letter from Serbian FM Jeremic describing Serbia's proposal to refer the question of Kosovo's independence to the International Court of Justice. He said that Croatia agreed this was a bad idea. He added that Serbian officials were indicating that such a referral to the ICJ would be a way for the Belgrade government to push the Kosovo issue off to the side of the domestic political agenda. Mikec said that Croatia's bilateral relations with Serbia continued to be strained, including the fact that Serbia was returning Ambassadors to EU capitals but not Zagreb. Croatia, therefore, was certainly interested in finding ways to help Belgrade get over the loss of Kosovo. Mikec noted that Croatia was also watching closely whether events in Georgia would have any impact on Serbia's plans, or on Russian support for an ICJ case on Kosovo. How, he wondered, could the UNGA ask the ICJ to consider the case of Kosovo, but not include any reference to South Ossetia or Abkhazia?

¶2. (C) POLCOUNS noted that the US also supported efforts to get Serbia to move beyond the Kosovo issue, but that such a strategy with Serbia could not come at the price of putting Kosovo in limbo or doing anything that would discourage others from strengthening cooperation with Kosovo and integrating it into the international community. Mikec said Croatia fully supported that view, and was also sensitive to the reftel points about potential unintended consequences from an ICJ opinion.
Bradtke